

National Agricultural Summary

September 18 - 24, 2000

Weekly National Agricultural Summary provided by USDA/NASS

HIGHLIGHTS

Freezing temperatures halted plant development and hastened ripening in the northern Plains and parts of the northern Corn Belt. Frost damage was limited, since crops matured well ahead of normal. The corn and soybean harvest accelerated, even though progress was hindered by rain in parts of the Corn Belt. Rain also hindered harvest progress in the Atlantic Coastal Plains and parts of the

interior Southeast. However, the precipitation provided much-needed soil moisture. Fieldwork and winter wheat planting were hindered by hard, dry soils across most of the Great Plains, but late-week rains softened soils, improved moisture supplies, and aided germination in some areas. Above-normal temperatures accelerated ripening, and dry weather aided harvest in California.

Corn: Eighty-four percent of the crop was mature, 5 percentage points ahead of last year and more than 1 week ahead of normal. Fields quickly ripened across the northern Corn Belt and Great Plains, where the season's first freezing temperatures shut down plant development. More than 30 percent of the acreage reached maturity during the week in Minnesota, South Dakota, and parts of Wisconsin. Fields reached maturity well ahead of normal in Illinois and Iowa. Progress was less advanced in Indiana, even though 20 percent of the crop reached maturity during the week. Seasonal temperatures aided development in Michigan, but fields ripened well behind the normal. Harvest was 25 percent complete, compared with 18 percent last year and more than double the 12-percent average for this date. Progress remained well ahead of normal, despite rain delays in parts of the Corn Belt. Harvest progressed nearly 20 percentage points in Illinois and Missouri. The harvest pace was 54 percentage points, about 3 weeks, ahead of normal in Kansas. Rain shortened the harvest week in the Atlantic Coastal Plains, but harvest advanced 20 percentage points in North Carolina before progress was delayed.

Soybeans: Eighty-one percent of the acreage was dropping leaves and 20 percent was harvested. Crop development and harvest progress were well ahead of last year's rapid pace and more than 1 week ahead of the 5-year average. Widespread frosts hastened ripening in the northern Great Plains, but crop damage was limited, as nearly all of the acreage was shedding leaves. Fields also quickly dropped leaves in Iowa, Minnesota, and Nebraska, despite below-normal temperatures. Near-normal temperatures aided development in the eastern Corn Belt, while above-normal temperatures accelerated development in the Mississippi Delta. Acreage dropping leaves remained well behind normal in Michigan and slightly behind normal in Wisconsin. Harvest rapidly accelerated, even though rain limited progress in parts of the central and eastern Corn Belt. The harvest pace was most active in Minnesota, where progress advanced 29 percentage points. Kansas and Louisiana growers harvested more than 20 percent of the acreage during the week. In Illinois and Iowa, growers harvested 15 and 16 percent of their acreage, respectively. Rain delays were more widespread in Indiana, where harvest progress was limited to 10 percentage points.

Cotton: Bolls were opening on 82 percent of the acreage, 4 percentage points ahead of last year and 10 percentage points ahead of the 5-year average. Twenty-three percent of the crop was picked, ahead of last year's 18-percent pace and 1 week ahead of the 16-percent average for this date. Fields quickly ripened in the Atlantic Coastal Plains, despite below-normal temperatures. Progress remained behind normal, especially in Virginia, where bolls were opening on 37 percent of the crop, about one-half the normal pace of 71 percent. Above-normal temperatures ripened fields in the Great Plains, lower Mississippi Valley, and adjacent parts of the

Southeast. Picking rapidly advanced in the lower Mississippi Valley, with isolated, brief rain delays. Louisiana and Mississippi growers harvested 21 percent of their cotton acreage during the week. Harvest was also unhindered in Arkansas, Missouri, and Tennessee, where picking was about one-fourth complete. Defolianters were applied in parts of the southern Great Plains, but some Texas growers were waiting for a frost to remove foliage. The harvest pace slowly gained momentum in the Atlantic Coastal Plains, but progress was halted by late-week rains. In California, unseasonably hot weather aided ripening early in the week, but the start of the harvest season was slightly delayed, while growers applied defolianters.

Winter wheat: Planting slowly progressed to 21 percent complete, well behind last year's fast start and more than 1 week behind the 5-year average. Field preparations and planting were delayed by hard, dry soils across most of the Great Plains. Planting remained active in the sandy soils on the central High Plains, with only brief rain delays. In Colorado, soaking rains improved topsoil moisture supplies and aided emergence, which advanced to 30 percent. Planting slipped further behind normal in Oklahoma and Kansas, but late-week rains softened soils and boosted topsoil moisture in some areas. Progress lagged far behind normal in Montana, South Dakota, Texas, and Washington. In the Corn Belt, planting slowly gained momentum, while growers remained focused on fall harvests. Planting accelerated in the Atlantic Coastal Plains before late-week rains halted progress.

Rice: Sixty-six percent of the crop was harvested, slightly behind last year's pace, but 3 percentage points ahead of the average for this date. Dry weather aided progress in the interior Mississippi Delta States, especially in Arkansas, where harvest progressed 21 percentage points. In California, harvest progress doubled to 30 percent complete. Scattered showers prevented completion along the western Gulf Coast and provided much-needed moisture for ratooned rice fields.

Other Crops: Eighty-seven percent of the sorghum acreage was mature and 64 percent was harvested. Fields ripened about 2 weeks ahead of last year and the average for this date. The harvest pace was 2 weeks ahead of last year and more than 3 weeks ahead of the average. In Kansas, 61 percent was harvested, six times the average for this date. Nearly half of the crop was harvested in Nebraska, compared with the average of just 2 percent. Harvest accelerated in the Corn Belt, but the corn and soybean harvests were the top priority for most growers. Sixteen percent of the peanuts were harvested, well behind last year and the average in inland areas of the Southeast. Progress was well ahead of normal in the southern Great Plains and slightly ahead of the average in the mid-Atlantic Coastal Plains. The sugar beet harvest gained momentum in the northern Great Plains, while sugarcane growers prepared equipment for the harvest season along the Gulf Coast.